

# 1

## INTRODUCTION

This study was initiated specifically at the request of Congress for the potential siting of a boathouse (rowing facility) within Arlington County along the Potomac River. Based on that direction, the National Park Service (NPS) is considering allowing the construction and operation of a rowing facility on the Potomac River that would include rowing equipment (boats) storage, and training facilities for the three Arlington County high school rowing programs. In addition, the facility may provide storage facilities and river access for others. The facility would be located along the Virginia side of the river on lands administered by the GWMP or nearby.

### 1.1 PROJECT PURPOSE

This study is intended to assess the potential of locating a boathouse/rowing facility at three areas along the Potomac River. Specifically, these areas are indicated in Figure 1-1 and identified as follows:

- Rosslyn waterfront, immediately upstream from the Theodore Roosevelt Island (TRI) parking lot
- Down river and adjacent to the CSX Railroad Bridge (downstream of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge), and
- Along the shoreline of Daingerfield Island.

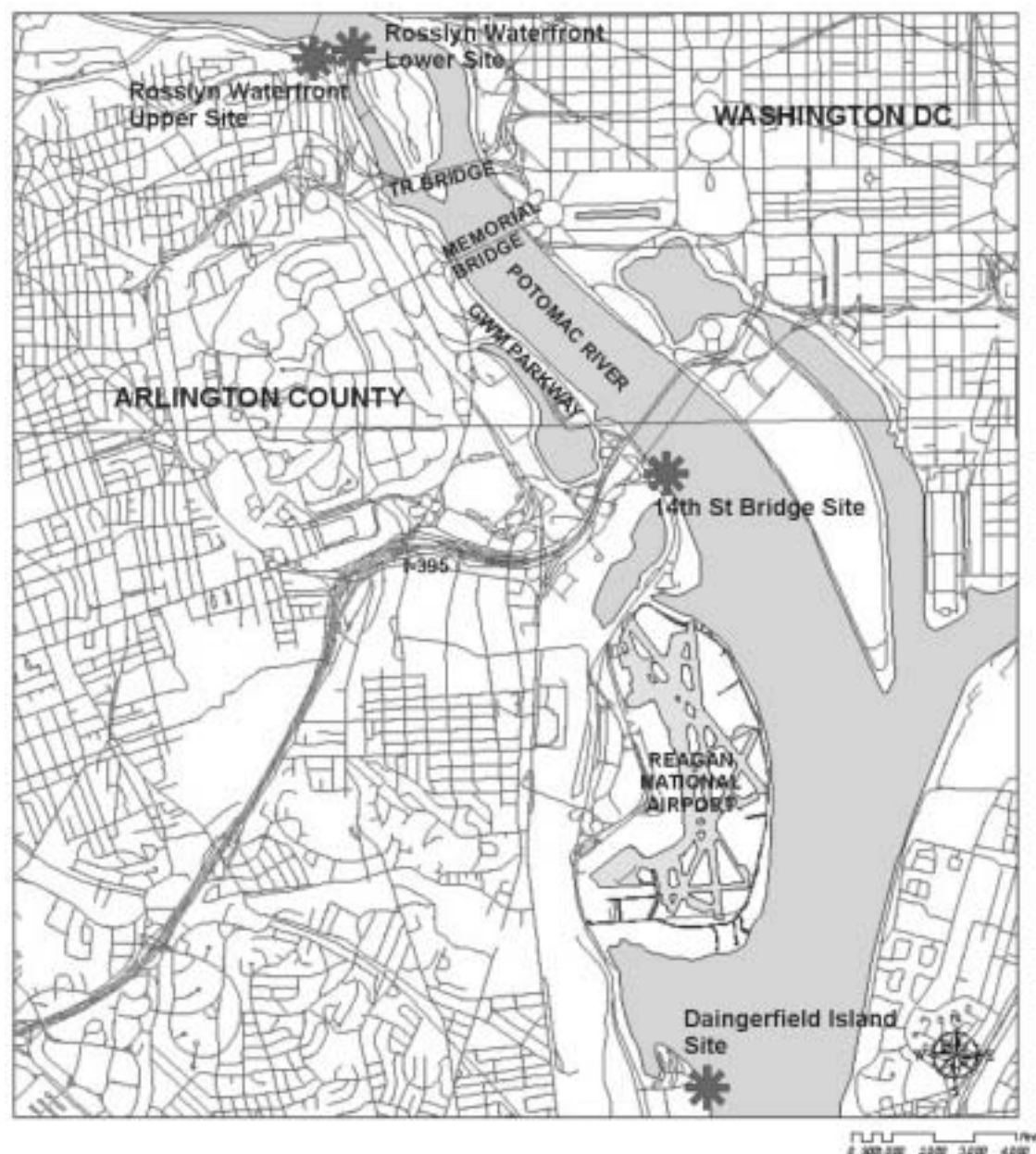


Figure 1.1: Study Area Locations

## 1.2 SCOPE OF THIS STUDY

The project scope included identifying a minimum and maximum practical program for the potential boathouse that would be used to analyze the study areas. The proposed minimum and maximum program are provided in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 provides a facility and site analysis of the Alternatives for the boathouse. The key factors for assessing a potential Arlington County Boathouse are physical conditions, visual/cultural resources, environmental impacts, economics and operational issues.

In the winter of 1999/2000, NPS conducted a public scoping session where comments were sought on four potential locations for the boathouse. All of these areas are located on the western shore of the Potomac River. This study required a synopsis of the public comments received. These are provided in Chapter 4.

Subsequent to this study, NPS will determine how/if to proceed further. If one or more sites appear to be able to accommodate the boathouse, NPS may proceed with a NEPA study and potentially a National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 review on that/those sites.

## 1.3 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE STUDY

There have been considerable efforts on the part of the NPS, Arlington County and a large number of agencies and individuals to locate a rowing facility along the Potomac River. NPS was and is interested in locating

boathouses along the Potomac River in the District and Virginia. This study was initiated at the request of Congress for the potential siting of a boathouse (rowing facility) within Arlington County. NPS has extended the study to include one site a short distance from the Potomac River, in Rosslyn and another site in the vicinity of Arlington County, at Daingerfield Island in Alexandria, Virginia. Congress has also directed the NPS to determine from this study a preferred alternative. However, prior to conducting a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study, NPS needs to determine the basic viability of such a facility, and if determined so, identify the most appropriate sites. Therefore, this study is a facility and site analysis and not a NEPA document.

Arlington County desires to provide greater general access for its citizens to the Potomac River. The NPS manages the Virginia Riverfront of the Potomac River from the American Legion Bridge in the north to Mount Vernon to the south. Currently, public access to the waterfront is available via the Mount Vernon Trail, trails on TRI, Columbia Island Marina, Four Mile Run and Gravelly Point. Two areas that are not within the jurisdiction of the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), the unit of NPS responsible for managing the NPS lands along the river, are the Reagan National Airport and the City of Alexandria waterfront. Currently, Arlington County residents use area boathouses, all of which are located in Washington DC, for rowing activities. The three Arlington County public high schools row out of these facilities as well: Wakefield High rows out of the Capitol Rowing Club along the Anacostia River; Washington-Lee rows out of Potomac

Boat Club along the Potomac River; and Yorktown High rows out of Thompsons Boat Center also along the Potomac River. Existing reports prepared by the County, and conversations with area rowers, indicate that there is a growing demand for rowing facilities in the area. In response to this demand and from support from the US Congress and Arlington County, NPS authorized this study to assess the potential of locating a boathouse/rowing facility along the Potomac River to service the Arlington County high schools and its residents.